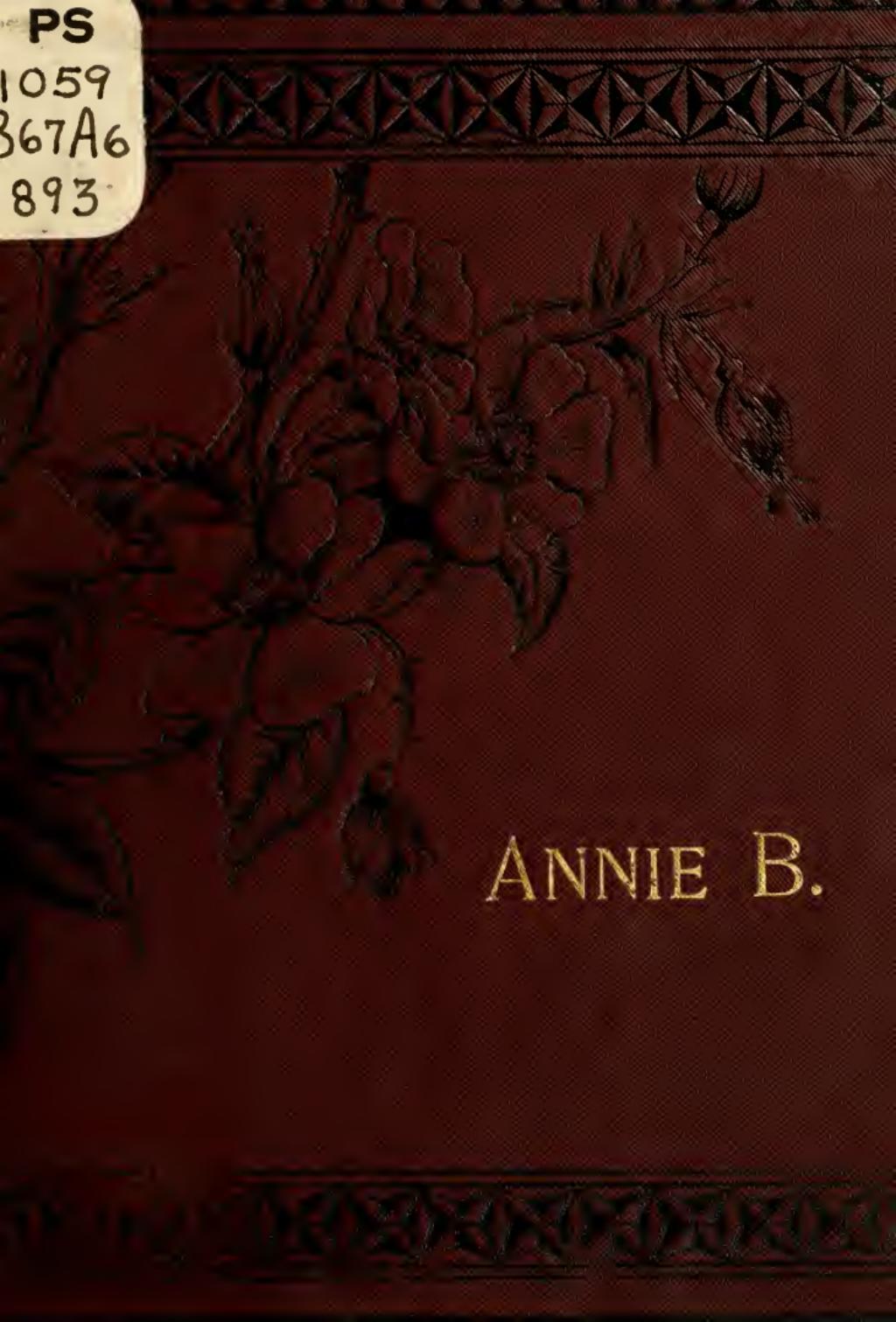


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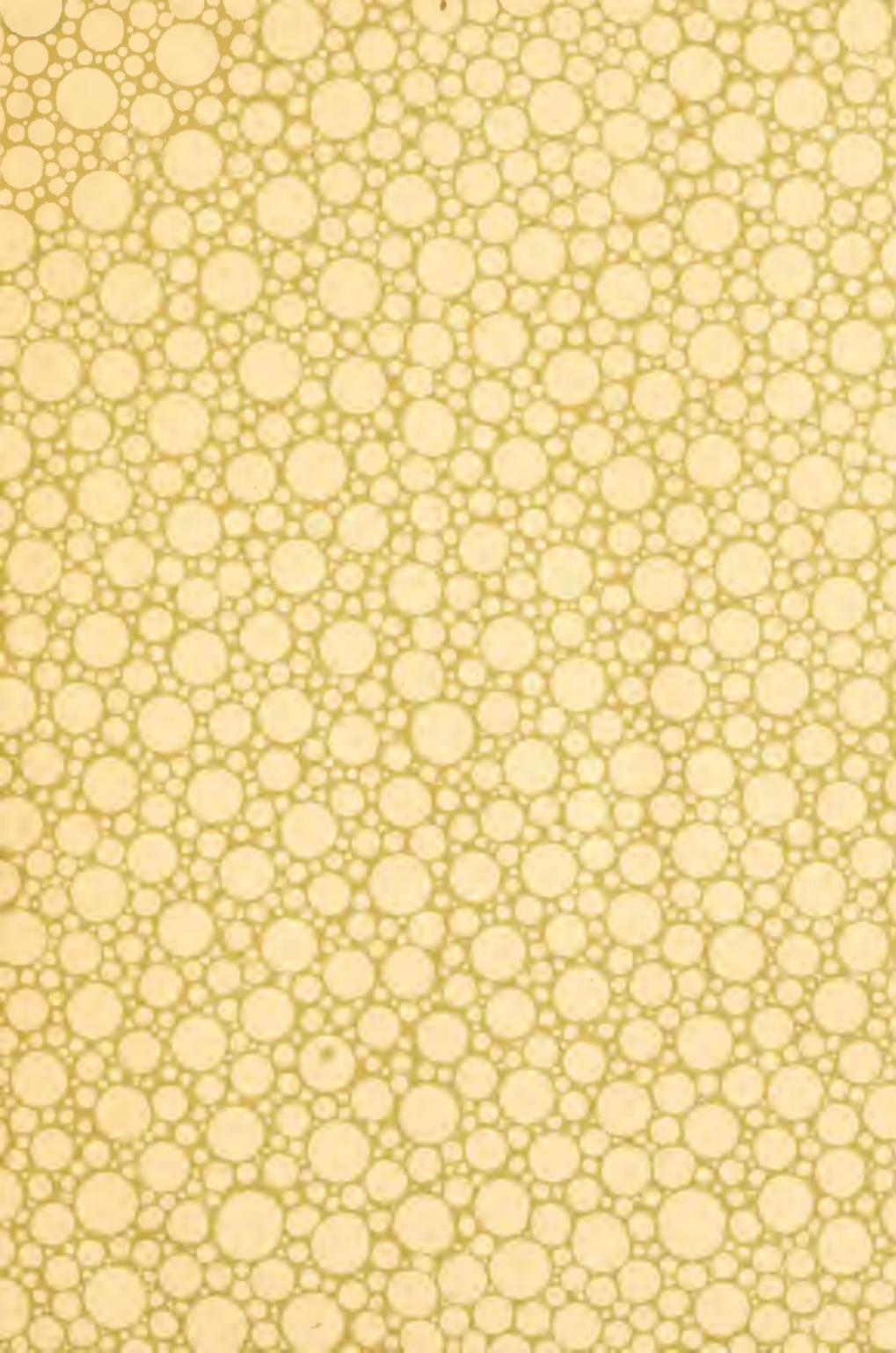
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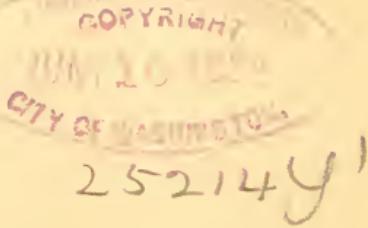


ANNIE B.,

THE DYING GIRL.

BY

T. H. BALL.



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ANNIE B., THE DYING GIRL.

The physician has come out from the room of the young Annie B., and in the sitting room of the family home he meets Edward G., who earnestly questions the grave-looking family physician.

EDWARD :

Will she not live? Cannot your skill restore?
Surely, so young, so fair, she is not doomed
In life's fresh morn to die. I cannot bear—
How can I bear the thought of losing her?
A few short months ago we were betrothed.
My heart, my life, my plans of life are all
Bound up in her. Oh, doctor, do not say
That she must die. But I can read no hope
In your grave look. Tell me the worst, the truth.

THE PHYSICIAN :

That she is young is true, and very fair,
But not too fair and not too young to die.
There is no human power can hold her back
More than a few brief months from the dark grave
Disease, that no physician's skill can cure,
Has its strong grasp upon her ; she must die.
Her faultless form, with all its native grace,
Her outer-self enrobed in beauty's charms,
Young as she is, and full of life and hope
As she has been to you and to us all,
Must shortly in the grave be laid away
Far from your sight to moulder there to dust.
You asked me for the truth, that truth you hear.

EDWARD :

But, doctor, it is more than I can bear

To lose her now, for she the center is
Of all my earthly happiness and hopes.
Apply your skill, restore her back to health.
Why must she die ? I see no reason why.
You have much skill in the great healing art ;
Apply that skill ; oh, do not let her die.

THE PHYSICIAN :

Young man, be calm. I tell you, human skill
Can never set aside great Nature's laws.
Do not the summer roses bud and bloom,
Then die ? Yes more, do not sometimes the buds
Fail to unfold their petals to the light ?
The worm is there, and none will ever see
Perfected beauty ; none will fragrance breathe,
The fragrance of a rich, sweet summer rose.

When once a worm hath eaten through a bud.
The buds of lilies are not sure to bloom,
And all the flowers of earth that bloom must die.
The giant oaks, the olive trees, must die.
All things that grow from out the earth, all things
That live and move upon the earth, must die.
Sooner or late, the time must come for all.
That which we call disease arrests, sometimes,
In infancy the vital force; again
In youth, in manhood, or, perchance, in age;
Or if disease or accident come not,
Some certain limit none can e'er exceed.
They die of pure old age! 'Tis nature's law,
And nature's laws, I tell you, none can break.
I pity you. I did not make these laws.
I did not make this earth. It is not I

That would cut short the life of that young maid
Around whom your fond heart is now entwined.
But if my teaching satisfies you not,
Here comes her pastor. Question him and see
What knowledge he can give to help you bear
Your present hard, inevitable lot.
One thing I know. He can not, as they say
His Master could, call back to life the dead,
Nor send the life blood coursing fresh and full
Through that frail, youthful form you love so well
When you have questioned him, then go to her.
She is a Christian girl. I know her well —
Have known her from her childhood. You may
trust
The words she speaks as from her inmost heart.
She knows her end is near; but when I said,

In answer to her question firmly pressed,
There is no hope of cure. In a few months
At most—it may be only weeks—the ground
This form of human loveliness will hold ;
There were no tear-drops in her deep-blue eyes,
There was no quiver to her still red lips,
As she replied : So I had thought and felt.
It seems to me that I must soon go home.
And you may rest assured I do not dread
To have this earthly form laid in the earth.
You call it lovely. Others do the same.
It is an earth-born loveliness at best,
And it must fade and die. You call it death,
I call it sleep. This animated dust,
This form of mine, this tent in which I dwell,
This body into which God sent my soul,

Must go to sleep and rest for a short time;
And then it will awake in a new life,
Fresher than children wake in summer morn.

I feel, now, very sure the sleep is short
Which, as you think, I am so soon to take;
For He who is my life, the Son of God,
Has been away from earth now very long,
And he will soon return. Sure is his word.
He promised to return and wake the dead.

But I shall not be sleeping in the grave,
That is to you the end of life, of man.

I shall be with Him in that glorious world
Of life and love, which He called Paradise.
Think not one moment that I fear to die.

I said, she is a Christian girl, and you,
I think, have made profession of that faith.

But you are not like her in her deep trust,
And in her full belief that He, the Christ,
Who, we all know, was crucified and died ;
Not only rose from death and lives above,
But will return, a living, human form,
Here to this very earth where he was born,
And will make this a bright and deathless world.
As for myself, you know that what I see
That I believe. My instruments of steel
Have cut all through the human form and found
No soul. How can I know I have a soul ?
I never saw a dead man come to life.
How can I know that He, the Nazarene,
Came back again to life ? Will here return ?
And will, as she believes, make earth a home ?
But yet, I grant, her faith is grand, her trust

Seems perfect in those strange, mysterious words
That He, whom she calls Lord and Master, spake,
But I have kept you far too long. Go now.
Her pastor, you will find, is still within.
Ask him why death is here and what it means;
And then to-morrow go and talk with her.
But lay aside your dreams of earthly love.

The pastor is found in an adjoining room, having made
a short call in the room of Annie B. where her mother and
youngest sister were.

EDWARD :

Respected pastor, I have come to ask
Some questions. Our physician has just left,
And he, as I suppose that you have learned,
Has said there is no hope or chance for health
To come again to my beloved friend,

That dearest being on this earth to me.

He says that she must die, and that ere long.

I know not how to give my loved one up.

Earth seems too dark and lone without the light
Of her clear eyes, without her loving smile,

Without the rippling music of her voice,

Without her joyous presence and her love.

What would be sunny skies and singing birds,

What would be landscapes fair and fragrant
flowers,

What would all earthly joys be to my heart,

Without her radiant form, her lips and eyes,

Her hands and ears and voice, through which her
soul,

Holds intercourse with nature and with me?

And when I asked, in grief, why she must die,

The doctor told me of great Nature's laws,
Is death indeed in nature? Is this law?

THE PASTOR:

My son, began the venerable man,
It is not strange that you should grieve and moan,
But you must learn to bow in humble trust
Before that Power that made and still upholds,
Before that Friend who notes each sparrow's fall.
Who knows each hair upon that dear young head.
You ask, "Is death one of great Nature's laws?"
Too well the Bible teachings you have learned
To think that Nature is apart from God.
That which we nature call is but the work,
The handiwork of Him whose mighty power
Called forth in the beginning Heaven and earth;

Called forth, we say, from nothing, for He spake
And it was done ; He issued his command,
The universe of matter and of mind;
All that we see and know, in quick response
To that firm mandate, into being sprang.
Of six creative days the Bible speaks,
While earth was fashioned as a home for man ;
And man was made, and woman made for man,
And they were good and happy ; all was good ;
And that first home, that Eden garden fair,
Was doubtless full of beauty and delight.
Two wondrous trees were there, the tree of life,
That in the midst of that bright garden stood ;
The tree of knowledge, fearful tree it proved,
Of knowledge both of evil and of good.
Death was not there, but life, a wondrous life ;

A young, fresh life, in a new form perhaps,
As yet untried, a mind, a living soul,
Breathed into dust, that dust made animate,
And so two creatures formed, allied to earth,
Yet in the image of their Maker, God.

That life, for aught we know, would have gone on
Forever ; for the tree of life was there.

But in that very garden death was named.
For God declared to man, whom he forbade
To eat the fruit of that one other tree,
That if he ate the fruit of that strange tree
Then he should surely die. He ate and died.

. That act of disobedience is called sin,
And so we read into the world came sin
And death by sin ; so death is penalty.
Not Nature's law ; not God's first plan for man ;

But for man's disobedience to his God

Death came upon the race. All sin, and all,
With very few exceptions, all must die.

In one sense then death is not law, but death
Is penalty for violated law.

She whom you love is of a sinful race.

Through a long line of ancestry comes sin.

She too has sinned, although forgiven now,
But die her body must because of sin.

It matters not were hers the fairest form

God ever made, it matters not how true

Her life has been since she began to trust;

Her fathers all have sinned, and she has sinned;

And those who sin must die. But death will have

For her and such as she no sting. Of death

The sting is sin. Of sin the power is law;

And she is under now, not law but grace,
And therefore death, the King of terrors called,
She can, without one fear as victor, meet.

The sadness of such death as hers will be
Is this: it takes her from her loved ones here.
But then it takes her to a glad, bright home.
You are too much disturbed in heart to-day
To meet with her. Go to your home and pray;
Go there and tell your Father, God, your woe;
But do not murmur at his righteous will.

Before his throne pour out your troubled heart,
If it need be, in sighs, and groans, and tears.
He can give strength to bear the heaviest weight
He ever lays upon a human soul.

Compared with what some suffer year by year,
Yours is a burden light. To love and lose!

The bitter cups of life of which some drink
You well may pray that God will keep from you.
To-morrow come and see this dying girl ;
And vex you not her sweet repose of soul.

EDWARD G. (alone at home):

The pastor thinks or says it is not much
To love and lose. I think it is enough
To take the brightness out of all my life.
It surely will take all the brightness out.
I shall go mourning all my days for her
Whom I have loved and lost. A shadow falls,
And ever will it rest upon my way.
Earth never will to me be what it was.
So weak, so frail am I, yes I must pray.

Another day ! That morrow now has come.
She still is on the earth. I go to her.

In her quiet room, into which the morning sun is shining, with fresh flowers upon the table, a few choice books at hand, close by her open Bible, Annie B. is found sitting up for a time in her easy chair. Her young sister has just left the room.

EDWARD :

Dearest and best beloved, sad is my heart,
As to your blissful presence I have come.
Our kind physician in whose skill we trust,
Our pastor too, who truly cares for souls,
Have both in pity to my bleeding heart
Sent me this day to you. And both have warned.
I am not here to speak of earthly love,
Although it almost takes my life away
To think that you must pass from this bright
earth,

This earth for me, alas! no longer bright.

Flowers now for me seem fading, and the light

Of the bright sun grows dim, for you must die.

The wise physician says that you must die.

And as he also says that you have said,

“ Think not one moment that I fear to die,”

I come to ask you how you look at death.

Just then there came through the partly opened door, from the organ where the young sister then was, some of the words and the music of a favorite song. After listening to this for a few moments, Annie replied:

Dear friend, my well beloved, chosen friend,

For such I now may call you unabashed,

I have shed many bitter tears for you

And for myself, since I have thought and felt

In these past weeks that life was very short,

For not without heart pangs could I give up

The common hopes of life. I saw full well
I could not be for you a loving wife ;
Could never call you husband ; have a home,
A dear, sweet, earthly home where we would live
Each for the other. And for you I grieved ;
Not for myself. But God will help you bear.
Of this no more. My strength I must not waste
On earthly love, its hopes, or pains, or joys.
Now let me tell you how I look at death.
Full well you know, for you have faith in Christ,
The ground on which I rest for life to come.
Because the Saviour died to save from sin,
And in himself and in his death I trust,
My soul is safe, redeemed and therefore safe,
As I accept, for me, his perfect work.
This body I have cherished, this myself

In part, yet not my own true self in full ;
My soul is I, more than this earthly form.
And yet these hands are dear to me, these eyes
With which I see, this long and glossy hair,
And my whole form I cherish ; not with pride,
Nor am I vain ; but this, my earthly form,
Wondrously made, made by the power of God,
Symmetrical and fair to outward view,
Part of myself I count. Myself I love,
As I am taught to love, for I must love
My neighbor as I love myself. This form
Death will dissolve. My heart will cease to beat,
The blood will cease to flow, the lungs to move,
And every organ of this fleshly form
Will cease its wonted functions to perform.
Then I, the part you cannot see, my soul,

Will leave the clay, the lifeless dust, and pass
To Paradise. That leaving we call death.
But for this dust I care, my friends will care.
I care, because my body, as my soul,
Has been redeemed by Him, my Saviour, God.
And as redeemed it will be raised to life,
Raised to a glorious and immortal life,
When He shall come to earth again as King.
My body therefore I wish laid away
To slumber in the ground a few short years,
Until the time of His appearing comes.
I do not therefore fear to die, to sleep,
Because redeemed from death, because my soul
Is safe and will be safe where angels dwell.
Because my earthly form, part of myself,
Is also safe. Do not mistake me here.

When I say raised to life, my body raised,
I do not mean this self-same form as now,
This flesh and bone, this hair, these hands, these
eyes,
Just as I am, that I shall back again
To outward life return. But I do mean
That a new form will rise which will be mine,
And rise, as I believe, from the same spot
Where this one turned to dust, for it is said,
All they within their graves shall hear His voice
And shall come forth ; and also it is said
When Jesus died, and rocks were rent, that graves
Were opened, and that after he arose
Then many bodies of the saints which slept
From out these graves arose, appeared alive,
And then into the holy city went.

So for this dust I care, because from this
As grain of wheat from grain ; as plant from plant,
By that same power divine that made me first
My new immortal body shall be raised.

The same, the same as this, yet not the same,
Sown in corruption as it will be soon,
In incorruption raised to fade no more ;
Sown in dishonor, dead because of sin,
But raised in glory, sin will be no more ;
In weakness sown, but raised in power for aye ;
A natural body sown, one born to die,
Sustained by earthly food, the blood, the life,
But spiritual raised, a body still ;
Let not that word mislead as though it meant
No matter there, but all of mind composed.
• Of matter still, of that which does not think,

Will my immortal, living form be made.
Perhaps you ask, “ Will I have hands and feet ?
And hair, and eyes, and lips, as I have now ? ”
Can you the meaning of those words receive,
“ The same, yet not the same ? ” Our Saviour’s form
Was somewhat changed when he arose from death.
When he went up on high, up to the throne.
It was the same, and yet in some respects
Not quite the same that on the cross was slain.
Although thus changed we safely may affirm
The body of the Virgin born, “ prepared.”
The Scripture says, in which there dwelt the
Word,
Was crucified and died, was buried, rose,
Had flesh and bones; of honey, bread, and fish,
Did eat (‘ broiled fish and honey-comb ’ and ‘ bread ’),

And went away from earth, up through the sky
To that great unseen world which we call Heaven.
And as He went so will He come again
To raise from sleep, out of the earth, his dead.
The first disciples could not think what meant
That "rising from the dead" of which he spoke.
Too many now fail to receive this truth,
That Jesus soon will come and raise His dead.
I go to sleep, my form will sleep in death,
Resting and waiting for my risen Lord.
I fear that you, a member of our church,
Have not laid fully hold of these great truths.
HIS COMING, then THE RISING FROM THE DEAD.
See how the early Christains longed and watched
And waited for the coming of the Lord.
For them His coming was the end of grief,

The glorious dawn of endless life and joy.
Nor they alone. The whole creation groaned,
As they could hear with their attentive ears,
And they themselves within themselves did
groan
For the adoption waiting. What was that?
A promised good, redemption not of soul,
But body. To the saints in Rome Paul wrote,
The sufferings of this present time are light
When with that future coming glory weighed,
Glory which is to be in us revealed
When are made manifest the sons of God.
For this we hope and do with patience wait.
Yet earnestly we long for the return
To earth again of Him who once was slain,
Who will return to earth again to reign.

We live in hope of everlasting life ;
In hope of everlasting life we die ;
But our true life is hid with Christ in God.
And when He doth appear we shall awake
And with Him then in glory shall appear,
And this makes part of our rich, glorious hope.
In other words, this hope of endless life
Includes the resurrection from the dead,
The coming of our Lord earth to restore ;
To make it, as the glad “ new earth,” a home
Where we may live and reign with Him for aye.
That “ tree of life ” of which man never ate,
From which he was kept back by Cherubim
And by a flaming sword—Oh, sword awake
Against my Shepherd and against the man
Who is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts—
When by man’s own wrong act he Eden lost ;—

That tree of life which seemed to leave this earth
When sin and death commenced their long, long
reign,

That tree will surely be on the new earth,
Beside Life's river growing, yielding fruit,
Its very leaves for healing use designed.

And this suggests a theme I may not touch
About one portion of the dwellers there.

The raised ones from the dead, the glorified,
Are those of whom I wish you now to learn,
And of the second coming of our Lord.

Search you the Prophets, the Epistles read,
And listen to the closing words of John,
That seer who saw in Patmos' lonely isle
Those glorious visions whose light cannot fade,
However learned interpreters may err,

Until is ushered in the Latter Day.

Then to the Gospels go. Hear Jesus' words,

About the wise and foolish virgins read ;

Read of the tares and wheat ; read of the net ;

About the talents and the judgment read ;

Those words about the “restitution” read ;

Of the ascension read, written by Luke,

Found on the record in the book of Acts.

I do not see how you can fail to find

The sure and certain coming of our Lord.

To-morrow, come again and we will talk

Of the new life in the new human form.

Edward spends the afternoon and evening hours busily searching the Scriptures, reading as in a new light.

Morning comes again, and in the pleasant, sunny room, with a bird's song coming in at an open window, he is again welcomed.

EDWARD:

My dearest Annie, I am very glad
To greet you here again. I had so longed
To live with you, to have you in my home
My own dear wife, my helpmeet all my days,
And now this dear, sweet hope can never be.
I know that you must pass from earth away.
I cannot let you go nor hold yuo heer.
The loving light of your soft eyes of blue,
The joy that shines forth from your sunny soul
The radiant hue that is around your form,
All these are more of heaven now than earth.
I see that you are now in Beulah land,
The Jordan river near, the crossing place
Not far away, but hidden from my sight.
You say it is God's will. You are content.

And I must give you up. But listen now.
The Scriptures I have searched. 'Tis as you say.
I find the promise of that glad new earth,
I find the promise that the dead will rise,
I find the Prophets give some lovely views
Of that glad, endless life, and John himself
Describes the Holy City, the rich home
Of countless multitudes who die no more.
In this same hope of yours I soon shall sleep,
And wake when you awake, when Jesus comes.
Then may I not meet with you in that land,
The home of life and love, the deathless world,
And claim you there as once again my own ?
And may we not to each forever be,
What no one else can be to you or me?
May we not dearer to each other be

Than if we had not been on earth betrothed ?
Have the same joys, the same sweet music hear,
Sing the same songs of praise, walk the same ways,
In the same knowledge grow from age to age,
Give equal homage to the same great King,
Share in his love alike and do his will,
And next to that deep love we give to Him,
Live for and with each other evermore ?
We who have loved on earth, may we not love,
Must we not love more dearly yet in heaven ?
All that I mean, more than I can express,
Your quick discernment grasps. I wait to learn.

ANNIE B.

Fond youth, began the listening, thoughtful maid,
Remember, I am soon to pass from earth.

As you have said, the river floweth near.
In those dark waters who can hold me up ?
You cannot in the crossing be ; your arm
Would be of no avail if I could lean
Even then upon it. I shall need to lean
Upon the everlasting arm that built
This universe, that holds all creatures up.
When I leave earth, I leave the ties of earth,
For none can with me go in death's dark vale.
My heart will cling until the very last
To earthly friends and kindred, to your love.
Then breaking loose from all I pass across
To the bright angel bands and ransomed throngs
Upon the other side, beyond the vale.
And 'mid their love, their holy, perfect love,
I shall find, doubtless, loving friends and true.

There will be much to learn, much to review,
In that brief resting time. Naught to forget
But sin and sorrow. Cause for rapturous joy
There will, there must be there in Paradise.
Earth and its scenes will not forgotten be;
And soon will come the hour of the return.
I do rejoice that you have found this truth.
We shall awake, our bodies will awake,
With trumpet sound, when the archangel's voice
Calls up the Christian dead. Shall we then meet?
Yes, we may meet in joy, but what we may
Unto each other be, in that new life,
I may not fully say. Remember this:
Our Lord has said that marriage to this world,
And to its children here belongs. He says,
But those accounted worthy, mark that word,

This resurrection from the dead to share,

This deathless, sinless world of love to reach,

In marriage are not given, marry not,

For they unto the angels equal are.

They never more can die, they children are,

And in a high and glorious sense, of God.

The children being of that wondrous life.

These earthly ties, so pleasant now, will end.

True bodies there will be, but not like these.

But you remember—here the young man spoke—

That Jesus ate and drank with chosen friends

After his resurrection from the dead.

He had the hands to touch, the eyes to see;

The feet with which to walk, the mouth to speak.

The body which was crucified arose,

And that same body left this earth for heaven.

Yes, I remember that, his friend resumed,
And furthermore, that God in human form
In Abraham's presence also ate and drank ;
And angels too, have hands and feet and voice,
And they can eat and drink. These things are
strange,

But therefore we must not suppose our forms
When they are incorruptible and made
Like to the glorious body of our Lord,
Will be disposed to eat and drink as now,
And hand clasp hand, and lip meet lip in love.

There are interpreters who claim that Christ
Out from the rocky tomb arose alive
Before that heavy stone was rolled away ;
That His peculiar resurrection form
Passed through the solid rock ; vanished, appeared

At His own will, not subject to earth's laws.
But others claim His body was the same
As it had been before, with flesh and bone,
And even blood, some say, until the hour
When on the Mount of Olives he was seen ;
That then his form was changed as he went up ;
Changed as were Enoch's and Elijah's forms,
For those two, you remember, did not die ;
And millions there will be when Jesus comes
Who also will not die but will be changed
From mortal to immortal at the sound
Of earth's last trumpet, when the dead arise.
While then interpreters do not agree
About that model form like unto which
Our bodies will be fashioned, this we know :
Beyond the confines of this life that love,

Which very dear and precious may be here,
Can never go ; I mean that race-born love
That binds two hearts together, man and wife.
It is peculiar, an exclusive love.

You could not now another maiden love,
And be to her betrothed, while I am here ;
It is not nature as it is not law.

I could not love another with the love
I have for you. But this exclusive love,
(Selfish in part it seems, we wish no one
To share it with us, beautiful and true,
It ever ought to be amid earth's loves.)

Belongs peculiarly to this our earth ;
It to a race belongs where births and deaths
Are known. On that new earth where none are
born

Among the glorified, where none will die,
The law of marriage is unknown, unknown
Is this peculiar love. You therefore see
We may not with each other live apart,
As you would like to think, from all the throngs,
The countless millions in that holy world,
Though dearly we may love each other here.
As here with earthly friends, so there, perchance,
There may be many whom we love alike.
Our lower natures die, and from the grave
Rise never more. The higher will remain,
And purified from all the dross of earth,
Like diamonds pure, to be dissolved no more.
Those forms immortal that from earth arise
Will be fit temples for our deathless souls.
We shall be happy, doubt not that, shall know,

I have no doubt, and love each other there,
For all are lovely, all are loved who dwell
Within the presence and the light of God.
For God, you know, is love, and he who dwells
In God and God in him must dwell in love.
This is the highest love our souls can know.
And this shuts out, you see, unholy ones,
The “hateful” and the “hating” from that world;
Shuts out the unforgiving and the proud,
Shuts out the haughty who disdain the poor,
Shuts out the selfish who live but for self,
Shuts out all those who “worthy” will not be.
No, my beloved friend, indulge no hope
That we shall love with an exclusive love
In that great glorious kingdom of our Lord.
But we shall live and love as others love,

We shall be loved by others in that joy
That is unspeakable, of glory full.
Live in this hope in which I long have lived,
For a short time earth may seem lone to you,
But life will have its duties, do them well.
Die in this hope in which I soon shall die,
And we shall meet in joy and live and love,
The heirs together of eternal life,
In bliss that will not change, or have an end,
When the glad kingdom and the King shall come.

She ceased to speak. Upon her lips now pale,
But of a faultless mold, ruby till now,
As o'er them swift a sudden pallor came,
A tender, loving kiss her friend impressed.

That kiss her lips returned, and round his neck
One moment were two rounded arms entwined.
And then with tears which he could not repress
He left the chamber of the dying girl.

In a few hours some unexpected, urgent, business affairs called Edward G. to England. In four weeks he returned, and not a day too soon.

He who had practiced long the healing art,
Watchful of every symptom day by day,
Has seen new, fatal complications rise.
He finds that death is nearer than he thought.

He is quite sure the end will be to-day.
It is a summer's day in June's bright month.
Her father, mother, and her sisters dear,
And brothers two are there, and that dear friend

To whom in girlhood's love she gave her heart.
Some cousins dear were there and neighbors kind,
For dearly she had been beloved of all.
Fresh roses gave their fragrance in the room,
And water lilies were beside her couch.
Herself had been both rose and lily called.
Her cheeks and lips wore not the rosy hues
Of other days. Her hands were very white,
But all the faultless symmetry of form,
The radiance from the sunny soul, were there.
And those deep eyes of blue were very bright,
While in their tender, clear, and earnest depths
A view of unseen glories seemed to lie.
A few sweet words of promise and of cheer
She gave to each as passed the morning hours.
Into the ear of her beloved friend,

Clasping once more his hand, pressing once more
Her fading to his eager, trembling lips,
She breathed these words in gentlest, tenderest
tone :

“ Meet me ere long among the glorified.”

The noontide hour went by ; a cooling breeze
Came from the westward from a passing shower.

Once more her pulse the kind physician felt ;
Then beckoned to the mother. She came near.

The closed, pure lips were parting yet again.

The mother bowed her ear to catch the words,

The last faint-spoken words : “ Oh, mother dear,
Almost across the stream of death am I.

I see the other shore of which we sing.

On a strong arm I lean, the Shepherd’s arm,
And I, a tender lamb, will soon be safe.

Oh, mother ! Paradise is near. This form,
This body, oh, my mother, lay away

In hope, until the resurrection morn.

Night now. Good night. The morning soon will dawn."

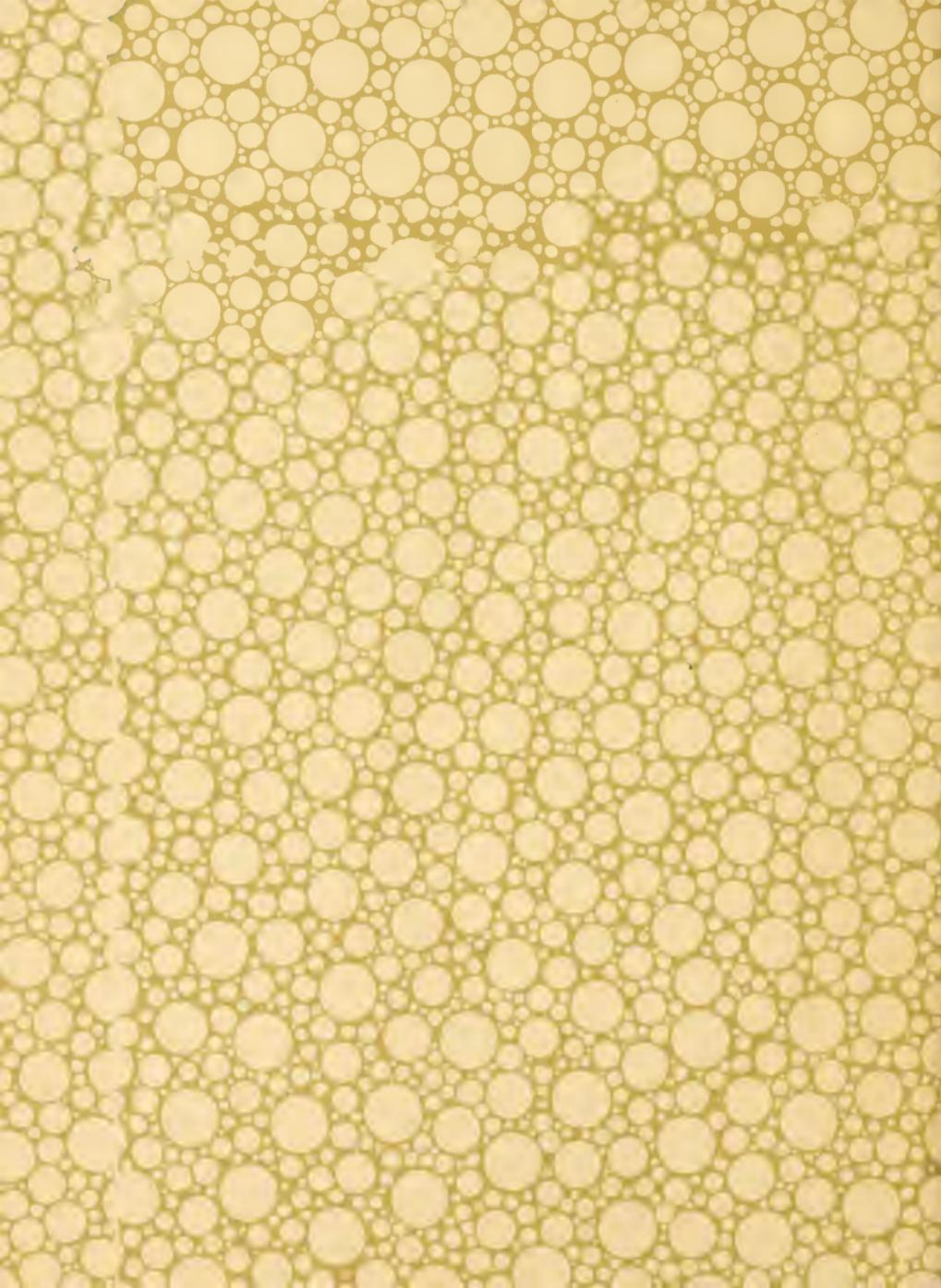
Slowly the words were uttered, softly breathed
Into the tender, loving mother's ear.

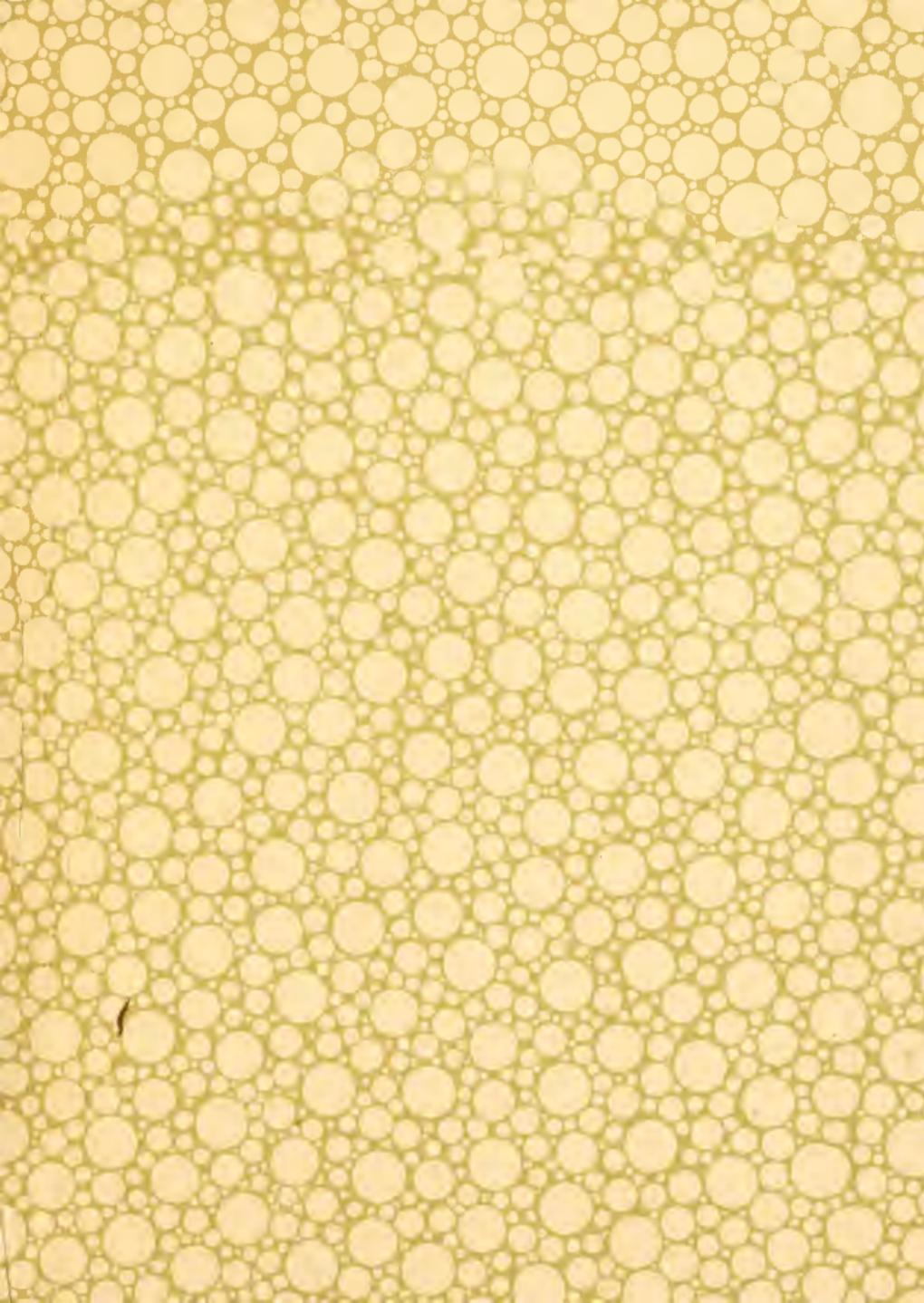
Then all was still within that sacred room.

The curtaining lids came over the blue eyes
For the short sleep. One flutter of the pulse
As the physician touchéd the wrist again ;
One quick, expiring breath, and the change came.
They looked upon the sleeping form and knew
The other shore was reached. "There passed a
soul."

'Twas the physician's voice that spoke. So grave,
So earnest was the tone ; in mute surprise
They listened all ; and with yet more surprise
They heard, in soft and reverent earnest words,
" Yes, Annie, I believe ; man has a soul."

Then said the pastor : " Let us pray." All knelt.
He who had doubted long if substance was
Which could not be with mortal eyes beheld,
With a new sense of homage to a Power
Whose wisdom, love, and grace were manifold,
Knelt meekly with the gathered household there ;
And there, beside the dead, an earnest prayer
Went up to God, of thankful, hopeful love. ;
In these petitions did those hearts unite,
That they like her might in the Saviour trust ;
That for his coming they might watch and wait
And wake from sleep with the first trumpet sound
That in the holy city they might dwell,
And with their loved ones meet and form new ties,
The ties that bind immortal dwellers there
Where death and sin and partings never come,
And Earth her jubilee forever keeps.





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